

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SOV:MGARRISON:RVC

APPROVED BY C:HSNENFELDT

S/S: JPMOFFAT

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 072742

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, UR

SUBJECT: SOVIET PROPAGANDA ON KING FAISAL'S ASSASSINATION

FOR THE AMBASSADOR

1. THE COUNSELOR CALLED IN SOVIET DCM VORONTSOV MARCH 31 AND INFORMED HIM ON THE SECRETARY'S INSTRUCTIONS THAT WE ARE DISTURBED BY THE OUTPOURING OF SOVIET RADIO AND PRESS MATERIALS WHICH IN EFFECT ACCUSE THE US OF COMPLICITY IN THE ASSASSINATION OF KING FAISAL. HE PASSED SELECTED QUOTATIONS TO VORONTSOV. THE COUNSELOR SAID SUCH REPORTS ARE MALICIOUS AND UNACCEPTABLE, AS WELL AS BEING TOTALLY UNTRUE. HE ALSO NOTED THAT WE HAVE BECOME AWARE THAT SOVIET DIPLOMATS IN THE MIDDLE EAST ARE MAKING SIMILAR COMMENTS TO REPRESENTATIVES OF MIDDLE EAST GOVERNMENTS. HE URGED THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT BRING AN END TO ALL SUCH ACTIVITIES IN THE PRESS AND OTHERWISE. HE ADDED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD SPECIFICALLY STATED THAT IF THIS CAMPAIGN CONTINUES WE CAN ONLY THINK THAT IT IS THE LINE OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT. SUCH A LINE CAN ONLY BE CONSTRUED AS UNFRIENDLY. HE NOTED THAT AMBASSADOR STOESSELHAD

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RAISED THE MATTER WITH KORNIYENKO ON MARCH 28, PRIOR TO

THE PUBLICATION OF THE PRAVDA ARTICLE ON MARCH 30.

2. VORONTSOV COMMENTED THAT WE SEEMED TO BE READING MORE INTO THE PRESS MATERIALS THAN WE SHOULD. HE THOUGHT IT RIDICULOUS TO THINK WE MIGHT BE INVOLVED IN THE ASSASSINATION OF A LEADER WHO WAS PRO-AMERICAN, SAID IT WAS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO GIVE SUCH AN IMPRESSION, AND NOTED THAT THE US PRESS WAS THE LEADING PURVEYOR OF THIS SPECULATION. THE COUNSELOR SAID THAT WAS NO EXCUSE FOR THE SOVIET PRESS. AFTER SOME DISCUSSION OF THE RELATIVE MALLEABILITY OF THE US AND SOVIET PRESS, VORONTSOV SAID HE WOULD REPORT THE DEMARCHE IMMEDIATELY TO MOSCOW. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ASSASSINATION, PROPAGANDA, INTERVENTION, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE072742
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MGARRISON:RVC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750111-0857
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750493/aaaadgsf.tel
Line Count: 74
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <24 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET PROPAGANDA ON KING FAISAL'S ASSASSINATION FOR THE AMBASSADOR
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, (FAISAL)
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006